

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

Fourteenth District, Michigan
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus

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CONYERS STRONGLY OPPOSES NEY BILL

In reaction to today's introduction of the Ney Election Reform bill, Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee and Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus, issued the following statement:

“In its current form, I am strongly opposed to this bill and expect to be joined in opposing it by every major civil rights organization, disability rights advocates and organized labor. It is astonishing that a bill professing to address the most significant civil rights issue of our time was crafted behind closed doors with no consultation from civil rights advocates.

The lack of consultation with the representatives of those who were disenfranchised in the 2000 elections is shown by the serious flaws in this bill. Among them are the following:

- The bill actually weakens the Americans with Disabilities Act by requiring that any accomodation of disabled voters be deemed “effective” by state and local officials;
- The bill allows states to completely opt out of any standards for machines if the state simply chooses to use machines that do not allow second chance technology;
- There are no standards that address accessibility for language minorities;
- There are no minimum standards for voter education;
- There is no requirement that states advise voters of their rights;
- States are permitted to op-out of provisional voting standards; and
- These standards are not worth the paper they are written on because the Attorney General has no ability to gather information on state non-compliance.

I remain hopeful that a bipartisan accord can be reached on this critical issue and I look toward ongoing discussions between Senators Dodd and Bond to reach consensus on real election reform.”